

Appl. No. 10/645,212
Amdt. dated October 22, 2004
Reply to Office Action of May 7, 2004

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheets of drawings include changes to Figures 2 and 4. These sheets, which include Figures 2 and 4, replace the original sheets including Figures 2 and 4. In Figure 2, previously omitted element 11 has been added. In Figure 4, previously omitted elements 11 and 13 have been added.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet
Annotated Sheet Showing Changes

REMARKS

Claims 2, 4–10, 12, 14–18, and 20–26 remain in this application. Claims 1, 3, 11, 13, and 19 have been cancelled. Claims 27 and 28 have been added.

Applicant acknowledges receipt of the non-final Office Action dated May 7, 2004. In that Action, the Examiner: 1) rejected claims 1–3 and 6–8 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by *Hsu* (U.S. Patent 5,266,740); 2) rejected claims 1–3 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by *Lin* (U.S. Patent 5,656,797); 3) rejected claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Hsu* and *Lin*; 4) rejected claims 9, 11–13, and 15–18 as being unpatentable over *Hsu* in light of *Nazaryan* (U.S. Patent 6,303,870); 5) rejected claims 9, 11–13, and 15–16 as being unpatentable over *Lin* in light of *Nazaryan*; 6) objected to the Drawings; and 7) objected to claims 4, 10, 14, and 19 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. In response to the Examiner's rejections, the Applicant submits this response.

I. DRAWINGS

The Examiner objected to the drawings on the basis that the drawings did not reference each claimed feature. Applicant has made amendments regarding the at least two connection members to make clear that Applicant is not claiming the at least two connection members themselves as a feature of the invention. Therefore, the drawings should be in allowable form without a depiction of or reference to the at least two connection members.

In the drawings, Figures 2 and 4 have been amended to include a reference number for first and second connectors to address the Examiner's objections to the drawings regarding the lack of reference to first and second connectors. In the specification, paragraph [0011] has been amended to include the additional reference numbers in the amended drawings. Specifically, reference numbers 11 and 13, respectively, for first and second connectors have been added to the specification and Figures 2 and 4 of the drawings. Applicant respectfully submits that the above amendments address the Examiner's objections to the drawings regarding first and second connectors, and that the drawings are now in condition for allowance.

II. ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

The Examiner stated that claims 4, 10, 14, and 19 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Dependent claims 4, 10, and 14 have been rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of the original base claim and any intervening claim(s). Applicant submits that these claims are now in condition for allowance.

Claim 19 has been cancelled.

III. CLAIM REJECTIONS – 35 USC § 102

The Examiner rejected claims 1–3 and 6–8 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by *Hsu*, and rejected claims 1–3 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by *Lin*.

Claims 1 and 3 have been cancelled.

Claims 2 and 6–8 are amended to depend directly from amended claim 4. Applicant restates that claim 4 is allowable as amended in view of the Examiner's suggestion and is now in allowable form. As claims 2 and 6–8 depend from an allowable independent claim, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 2 and 6–8 are also in condition for allowance.

IV. CLAIM REJECTIONS - 35 USC § 103

The Examiner rejected claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Hsu* and *Lin*. The Examiner rejected claims 9, 11–13, and 15–18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Hsu* in light of *Nazaryan*. Additionally, the Examiner rejected claims 9, 11–13, and 15–16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Lin* in light of *Nazaryan*.

Claims 11 and 13 have been cancelled.

Claims 5 and 9 depend from amended claim 4. Claims 12 and 15–18 depend from amended claim 14. If an independent claim is nonobvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103, then any claim depending therefrom is nonobvious.¹ As claims 5, 9, 12, and 15–18 depend from an allowable independent claim, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 5, 9, 12, and 15–18 are also allowable. Applicant requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection from claims 5, 9, 12, and 15–18 as they are in condition for allowance.

V. AMENDMENTS MADE NOT RELATED TO PATENTABILITY

Applicant has amended claims 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 17, 18, 20, 24, and 25 to more clearly, correctly, and properly claim the invention and not for purposes of patentability. Specifically, Applicant has made amendments regarding the at least two connection members to make clear that Applicant is not claiming the at least two connection members themselves as an element of the

¹ MPEP § 2143.03.

invention. Applicant also amended the claims to make clear that at least two, and thus possibly more than two, connection members may be accommodated.

These statements are not meant to be an admission that the other amendments were necessarily made for purposes of patentability, to be limiting in any way, or to be all-inclusive of amendments not made for purposes of patentability.

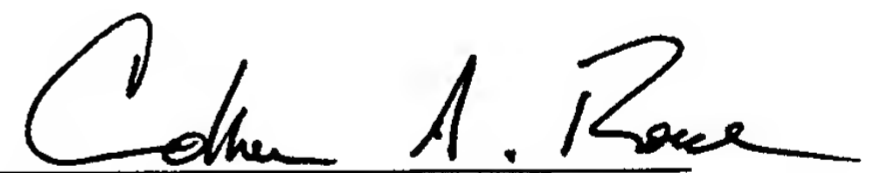
CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration the pending claims and that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would expedite the resolution of this case, he is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned.

In the course of the foregoing discussions, Applicant may have at times referred to claim limitations in shorthand fashion, or may have focused on a particular claim element. This discussion should not be interpreted to mean that the other limitations can be ignored or dismissed. The claims must be viewed as a whole, and each limitation of the claims must be considered when determining the patentability of the claims. There may also be other distinctions between the claims and the prior art that have yet to be raised, but that may be raised in the future.

Respectfully submitted,

CONLEY ROSE, P.C.

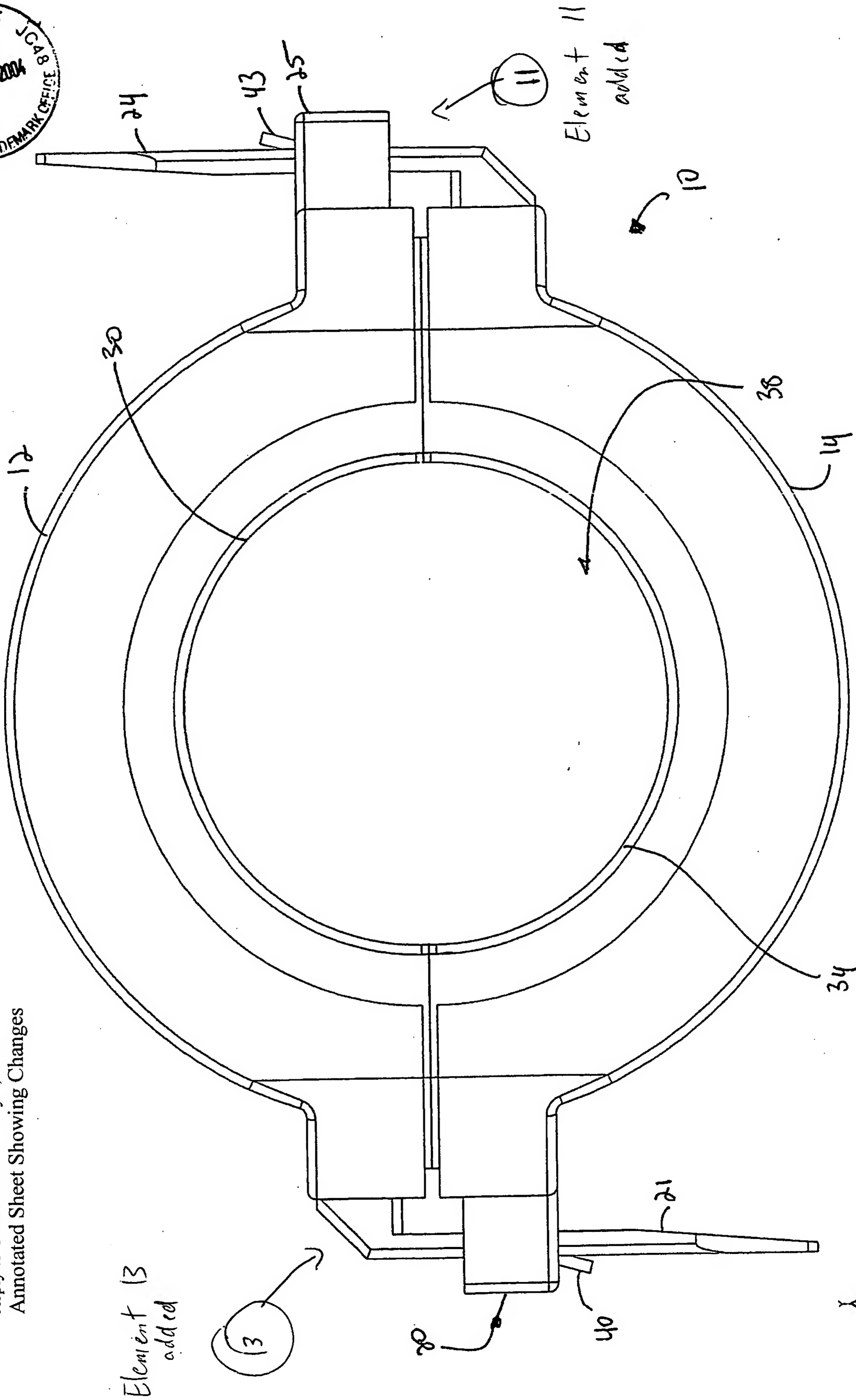


Collin A. Rose
Reg. No. 47,036
P.O. Box 3267
Houston, TX 77253-3267
(713) 238-8000 (Phone)
(713) 238-8008 (Fax)

Attachments



Appl. No. 10/645,212
Amdt. dated October 20, 2004
Reply to Office action of May 7, 2004
Annotated Sheet Showing Changes



Element 13
added

13

Element 11
added

11

Figure 4



Appl. No. 10/645,212
Amdt. dated October 20, 2004
Reply to Office action of May 7, 2004
Replacement Sheet

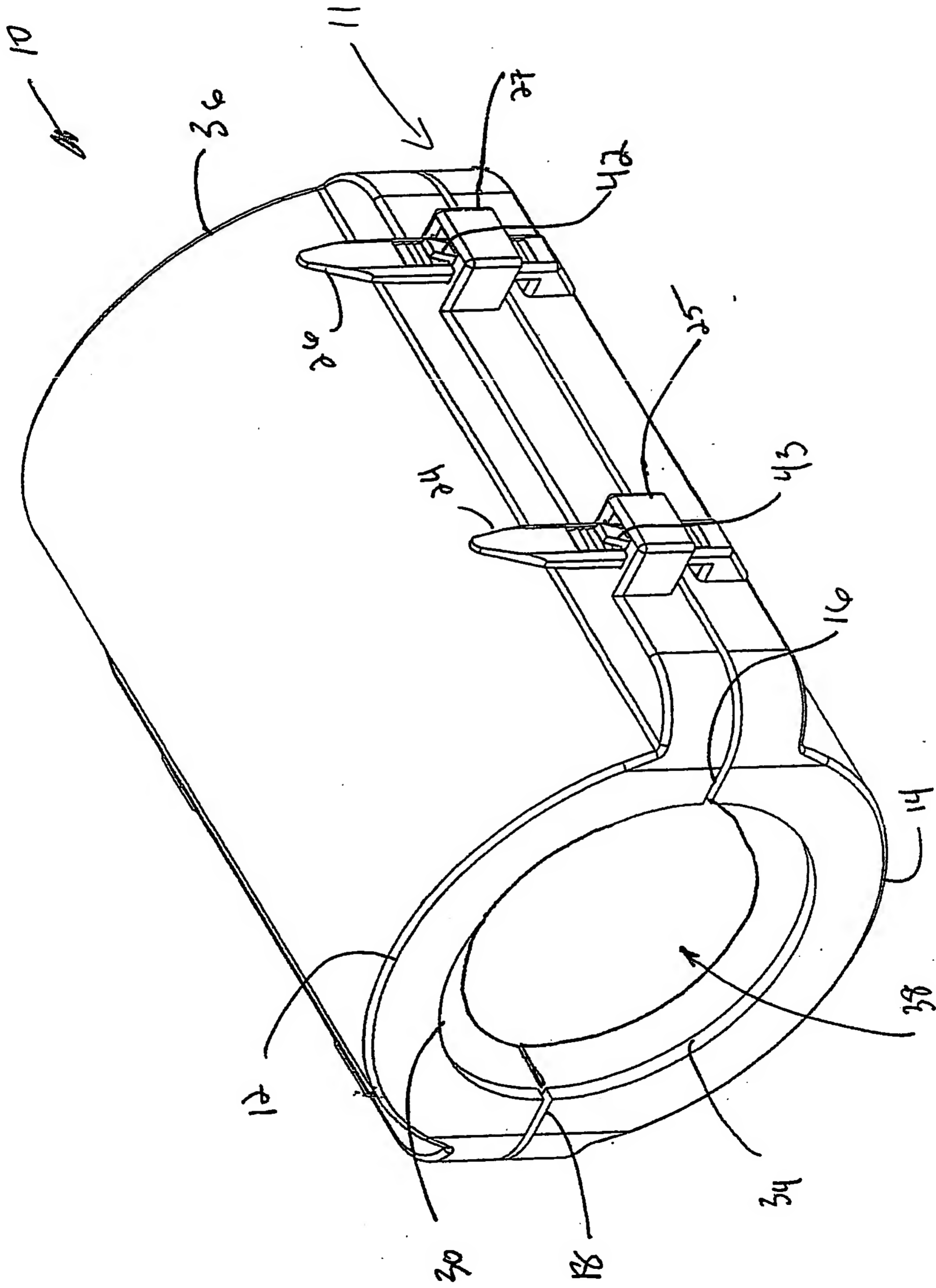


Figure 2